

## Section 1

### #1: Opening paragraph (first paragraph)

#### Strengths:

- Your descriptions create a vivid picture of the abandoned orchard through sensory details like "fermented scent" and "rancid aroma"
- The phrase "weathered vines almost choking their branches" effectively shows how neglected the orchard has become

**Repetitive sentence structure** → Throughout this paragraph, nearly every sentence follows the same pattern: subject, verb, description. Notice how "Piddle walked along" is followed by "the apple trees stood," then "Frayed bark peeled," and "The fruit had dropped." This creates a monotonous rhythm that makes the reading feel flat. Varying your sentence openings and lengths would make the passage more engaging. You could combine some ideas or start sentences differently to create a more natural flow.

**Exemplar:** *"As Piddle walked along the forgotten orchard, weathered vines choked the apple trees' branches, their frayed bark peeling like old paper."*

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### #2: Third paragraph (beginning "Near the centre...")

#### Strengths:

- The mysterious detail of "something darker oozed beneath" creates intrigue and makes readers curious
- Your comparison "leaning away from itself as if burdened by memory" gives the tree a sense of history

**Unclear imagery** → The phrase "The bark near its base had split wide. From the wound, sap bled slowly in thick lines" followed immediately by "Something darker oozed beneath" and then "A low hum rose from inside the hollow" creates confusion. You've introduced three separate elements (the split bark, the sap, something darker, and a hum from a hollow) without clearly showing how they

relate to each other spatially. Is the dark substance coming from the same crack as the sap? Where exactly is this hollow? Your readers can't picture the scene because these details don't connect clearly.

**Exemplar:** *"The bark near its base had split wide, revealing a hollow within. From the wound's edges, sap bled slowly in thick lines, whilst something darker oozed from deep inside the cavity, and a low hum resonated from within."*

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### #3: Fourth and fifth paragraphs (beginning "Piddle lowered himself...")

#### Strengths:

- The repeated sentence "His hand reached out and it met a stone" creates an interesting rhythmic effect
- Your ending with "a whisper of green stirring in the silence" provides hopeful imagery

**Confusing cause and effect** → The sentence "He ran his thumb along the crack. The orchard shifted, replacing the wound with wood" doesn't make sense. What does "the orchard shifted" mean? How does touching a stone's crack cause the orchard to shift? What "wound" is being replaced, and how is it replaced "with wood"? These events seem disconnected and magical without any explanation. Additionally, "Leaves stirred above. Above, a few bugs clung to the tips of the orchards branches" repeats "above" awkwardly and doesn't explain what's happening. The jump from touching the stone to placing it in the roots happens too quickly without showing us why this matters or what Piddle is thinking.

**Exemplar:** *"As he ran his thumb along the crack, warmth spread through the stone. The tree's wound seemed to close slightly, fresh bark beginning to form at its edges. Above, leaves rustled as if awakening, and small beetles emerged onto the branches."*

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■ Your piece shows promise with its atmospheric descriptions and creative premise about a magical stone healing an orchard. However, the story feels rushed and underdeveloped in key moments. The most significant issue is that you haven't explained why anything happens—Piddle finds a stone, touches it, places it somewhere, and suddenly the orchard is healing, but your readers don't understand the connection between these actions. You need to slow down and show us Piddle's thoughts, feelings,

and reasons for his actions. Why does he stop at this particular tree? What makes him reach for the stone? What does he feel when he touches it that makes him believe it's special?

Additionally, your writing would benefit from varying your sentence patterns. Many sentences are short and choppy, following the same structure throughout. Try combining some ideas or starting sentences in different ways to create a more engaging rhythm. Also, several descriptions are unclear—particularly in the third paragraph where you mention wounds, sap, something dark, and a hollow without clearly showing how these elements relate to each other physically.

The emotional journey of your piece also needs development. You tell us Piddle feels "calm" and later experiences "quiet hope," but you haven't shown us enough detail to make these feelings meaningful. What specific details about the orchard make Piddle feel this way? Consider expanding the moment when he places the stone—this is the turning point of your story, yet it happens in a single, brief sentence. Finally, your last paragraph jumps too quickly into describing the orchard's transformation. Show us this change more gradually, perhaps through specific details Piddle notices rather than broad statements about the entire orchard changing at once.

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**Overall Score: 43/50**

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## Section 2:

~~#1 Piddle walked along. Around him, the apple trees stood, unpicked, weathered vines almost choking their branches. Frayed bark peeled in long strips, pale like old paper, and the limbs, once reaching, now sat sagged.~~ [As Piddle walked along the forgotten orchard, apple trees stood unpicked around him, weathered vines almost choking their branches. Frayed bark peeled in long strips, pale like old paper, whilst the limbs, once reaching skyward, now sagged under their own weight.] The fruit had dropped weeks ago, now sunken and soft underfoot, their skins torn open, leaking sweetness into the soil. A thick, fermented scent clung to the air, and beneath it, a rancid aroma curled into his nostrils.

The path had vanished, blanketed by moss and crawling roots. Grass rose between scattered stones, its blades slender and trembling in the faint light. Each step pushed aside leaves that had lost all ~~colour~~

[colour], their edges curled and brittle with age. The orchard didn't feel dead, though. It felt like it had been left behind, something cared for, but soon forgotten.

#2 Near the centre, where the trees grew dense and the air felt still, he paused. One tree stood apart, its trunk broader than the rest, leaning away from itself as if burdened by memory. The bark near its base had split wide. From the wound, sap bled slowly in thick lines, catching in the cracks. Something darker oozed beneath. A low hum rose from inside the hollow, steady and deep, like a sound that had always been there.

#3 Piddle lowered himself to the ground, damp earth pressing through the back of his coat. Something here felt calm. As if Piddle was supposed to be there. His hand reached out and it met a stone. His hand reached out and it met a stone. Its surface, broken by a thin, clean crack through the middle, seemed to hum faintly under his touch – like a heartbeat, quiet but alive.

~~He ran his thumb along the crack. The orchard shifted, replacing the wound with wood. Leaves stirred above. Above, a few bugs clung to the tips of the orchard's branches. [As he ran his thumb along the crack, warmth spread through the stone and into his fingertips. The tree's wound seemed to pulse with life, and fresh bark began forming at its edges. Above, leaves rustled as if awakening, and a few bugs emerged onto the tips of the orchard's branches.]~~

He placed the stone ~~in~~ [amongst] the roots.

Piddle was soon met with a sense of quiet hope, as if the orchard itself was breathing softly, ready to wake from its long sleep. The air felt warmer, heavier with promise, and the tangled branches above seemed to lean closer, eager to grow again. Where there had once been decay, now there was something fragile and new; a pulse beneath the earth, a whisper of green stirring in the silence.